

Five Parishes *Their People and Places*

A History of the Villages of Castor, Ailsworth, Marholm with Milton, Upton and Sutton



By the CAMUS Project

FOREWORD

– Sir Stephen Hastings

The CAMUS Project is a collection of personal reminiscence, record and research about a group of five English villages on the borders of Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire. It may be unique: for it is compiled not from external research by questing academics or historians but, in their own words, by the people of these rural communities themselves. Several of them farm the same land their grandfathers did; some may trace their presence back to the Domesday Book. It tells of their history, their architecture, their way of living and their means of livelihood from the coming of the Romans until the edge of living memory.

Tenant farmers many were, and still are: first of the Abbey of Medehamsted (now Peterborough); later of the Fitzwilliam family, whose progenitor, Sir William, stapler of Calais and client of Cardinal Wolsey, purchased the estate of Milton in 1502. Milton has remained in the ownership of this family ever since and their benign influence still forms much of the background of life in these Parishes. As with many great rural estates, the story of Milton would be incomplete without a note on the Fitzwilliam Foxhounds, one of only four private Packs still left in the country. Kennelled at Milton, an account of their Masterships, Huntsmen and coverts provides a vivid impression of how from the early 18th century until the present day, hunting has been woven into the fabric of country life. The church bells are rung by willing hands, today, when hounds meet on Castor village green.

Through these pages we trace the changes in shape and method of farming, from the excavation of a Roman holding through the open field system of ridge and furrow, to the Enclosures of the late 19th century and on to the age of the combine harvester. Here are recalled the very names of the last teams of working horses; splendid Percherons and Shires, and of the fields they ploughed. The rattle of the milk pails in the early morning was still greeted in these villages as late as the 1950s.

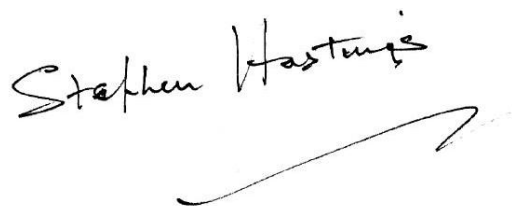
The section on the Parish records makes compelling reading. Not simply for the pattern and identity of birth, death and marriage, historically significant though some were, but as a social study. The Parish system was used ‘to administer nearly all local matters’ including the Muster rolls, Tithe rolls and the Poor Law. ‘Bastardy’ for instance, and the care of illegitimate children, was a matter for the Parish. It seems to have been dealt with fairly, practically and with humanity – the fathers’ responsibility generally established and admitted – be he married parishioner, village doctor, or even Abbot! A useful example perhaps for those responsible for these matters in our cities today.

We learn the names of those villagers called to the service of their country, from the indentured archers and billhook men on the Muster rolls of the parishes in Henry VIII’s reign, to the long rolls of honour from the two great wars of the 20th century.

Thus, from their Celtic ancestors to the coming of Rome; from the earliest Anglo Saxon settlements through the ferocious Danish raids; from the establishment of Ecclesiastical administration and the power of the Great Abbey, to the Dissolution and the arrival of the Tudor dynasties; from the depredation of Cromwell’s puritans to the Restoration; here is the testimony of Peer, Parson, Ploughman and Poacher. It is the veritable story of the centuries in a corner of the heart of England.

But for all their sense of history and heredity, there is no static nostalgia here. The authors of these essays and the population of these villages represent a vital and energetic community. The integrity of life has held against the assaults of time and the King’s enemies. In the age of television and computer, Sunday worship is still normal and the bonds which have linked folk for generations remain. People look after each other in these villages and respect their monuments and their institutions. Here is the evidence to prove it.

Apart from its great intrinsic interest the CAMUS Project is of public importance and deserves to be widely read. The authors are too numerous to mention here but they deserve our profound thanks and congratulations. Finally, no praise is too high for the Editor, The Rev William Burke, Rector of these Parishes, who promoted and organised the whole enterprise, as well as contributing four fascinating chapters himself.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'Stephen Hastings', with a long, sweeping horizontal flourish underneath.

CONTENTS

Foreword <i>Sir Stephen Hastings</i>	3
The CAMUS Project <i>William Burke</i>	6
Subscribers List	7
Introduction - The Historical Background <i>Keith Garrett and William Burke</i>	8
Time Line A Chronology of our Parishes <i>Gill Slidel</i>	11
Colour Plates	
THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND - Archaeology and History	
Chapter 1. Prehistoric and Roman Times <i>Andrew Nash, Stephanie Bradshaw, Ben Wood</i>	17
Chapter 2. Survey of the Roman Roads <i>Michael Brown</i>	31
Chapter 3. The Early Anglo-Saxon Period – General <i>Ben Wood</i>	41
Chapter 4. The Anglican Period: Royal Ladies of Castor <i>Avril Morris</i>	45
OVERVIEW OF VILLAGE AND CHURCH HISTORIES	
CASTOR	
Chapter 5. Castor Village <i>William Burke</i>	57
Chapter 6. Castor Church <i>William Burke</i>	67
Chapter 7. The Buildings of Castor <i>Kath Henderson and Elaine O’Boyle</i>	85
Chapter 8. Castor House and its People <i>Claire Winfrey</i>	97
AILSWORTH	
Chapter 9. Ailsworth Village <i>Carol Humphries and Joan Pickett</i>	105
Chapter 10. The Buildings of Ailsworth <i>Carol Humphries and Joan Pickett</i>	115
SUTTON	
Chapter 11. Sutton History <i>Keith Garrett</i>	121
Chapter 12. Sutton Church <i>Keith Garrett</i>	129
Chapter 13. The Buildings of Sutton <i>Keith Garrett</i>	137
UPTON	
Chapter 14. Upton History and Buildings <i>John Howard</i>	143
Chapter 15. Upton Church <i>John Howard</i>	151
MARHOLM	
Chapter 16. Marholm Village and Buildings <i>Hazel Yates</i>	157
Chapter 17. Marholm Church <i>Hazel Yates</i>	169
AGRICULTURE and VILLAGE LIFE	
Chapter 18. Farming and the Villages <i>William Burke</i>	177
Chapter 19. Occupations and Businesses <i>John Howard</i>	193
Chapter 20. Leisure, Recreation and Village Organizations <i>John Howard</i>	205
Chapter 21. Rural Pastimes <i>Mark Smith</i>	219
MILTON	
Chapter 22. Milton Park and The Fitzwilliam Family <i>William Craven</i>	227
TRANSPORT	
Chapter 23. The Railways through the Parishes <i>Richard Paten and Keith Garrett</i>	239
Chapter 24. The River Nene <i>Nigel Blanchford</i>	247

NATURAL HISTORY		
Chapter 25.	Natural History <i>John and Emily Finnie</i>	255
PEOPLE		
Chapter 26.	People from the Parish Records <i>William Burke</i>	263
Chapter 27.	Military – People of Two World Wars <i>Joan Marriott and Margaret Brown</i>	269
Chapter 28.	Reminiscences - People and Places <i>Brian Goode</i>	283
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION		
Chapter 29.	Castor Parish Council <i>Stephanie Bradshaw</i>	297
Chapter 30.	Castor Schools <i>Kath Henderson</i>	305
JUBILEES		
Chapter 31.	Celebrations <i>Brian Goode</i>	317
Chapter 32.	Flags and Bunting <i>Fred and Grace Gibbs</i>	329
APPENDICES		
Appendix One	Domesday Book Records for the Hundred of Upton	339
Appendix Two	Rectors of Castor from AD1228	339
Appendix Three	Rectors of Marholm from AD1217	340
Appendix Four	Anthem for the Feast of St Kyneburgha	341
Appendix Five	Castor, Inventory of Church Furnishings AD1558	342
Appendix Six	Marholm, Inventory of Church Furnishings AD1558	342
Appendix Seven	Compton Census of 1676	342
Appendix Eight	Muster Rolls 1536 for all Five Villages	342
Appendix Nine	Militia List, Ailsworth 1762	343
Appendix Ten	Militia List, Castor 1762	343
Appendix Eleven	Militia List, Marholm 1762	344
Appendix Twelve	Militia List, Sutton 1762	344
Appendix Thirteen	Militia List, Upton 1762	345
Appendix Fourteen	Population - Castor, Ailsworth, Sutton, Upton	345
Appendix Fifteen	1801 Population Return – Castor	345
Appendix Sixteen	Tithe Register for Castor – 1844 List of Owners and Tenants	346
Appendix Seventeen	Tithe Roll 1847 List of Owners, Occupiers and Locations, Castor and Ailsworth	347
Appendix Eighteen	Mr Hales’ Lecture, Extracts, Castor, 28th April 1883	348
Appendix Nineteen	Listed Buildings – Ailsworth	350
Appendix Twenty	Listed Buildings – Castor	350
Appendix Twenty One	Census 1881 Analysis <i>Douglas Gillam</i>	351
Appendix Twenty Two	Gazetteer all Five Villages 1849	352
Appendix Twenty Three	Gazetteer all Five Villages 1874	353
PICTURE GALLERY		354
INDEX		375
GENERAL MAPS		
1xA3 1:25000, Whole of Benefice (Map in colour section)		
5xA4 1:10000, Village Centres in Village History Chapters		
Roman Roads, 1:50000 Map in Chapter 2		

THE CAMUS PROJECT

The CAMUS Project (named after Castor, Ailsworth, Marholm, Milton, Upton and Sutton) grew out of the Castor Parish Church Archive Group, which was concerned with researching, collecting and indexing material about the history of the five villages and Milton estate. In 2002 a group from the villages agreed to write a book and to put all the archives and material collected, including the parish registers, on to a web-site, to make the information more widely available and ensure its survival. The project was awarded a Local Heritage Initiative Grant by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The web-site has now been established (www.thearchive.org.uk) and the lengthy process of transferring material onto the web has started. This is a process that will be continuous as more information is collected. Meanwhile, the first fruits of the project are the chapters in this book.

Why these Five Villages and this Park? Quite simply, because there have always been close historical, ecclesiastical and personal ties between them. It would be very difficult to write a history of one without much reference to the others. They have always been in the same Hundred (the Upton, later to become the Double Hundred of Nassaburgh). All five villages and Milton Park were part of the Abbey Lands, with the Abbot of Peterborough as their feudal overlord. Castor, Ailsworth, Belsize, Sutton, Upton and Milton were in the same parish from the earliest days of Christianity until 1851 (Ailsworth, Belsize and Milton are still in Castor Parish.) Marholm, while being a separate parish since 1217, was originally probably part of the same parish, and for much of its history has shared the same parish priest as the others since then.

Today these parishes share the same rector. Many of the farming families, such as the Darbys, Jarvises, Longfoots and Harrises extend across the parishes, as do Milton's lands and interests. Today the villages share the same school. They still support each other in many ways.

An old navigational epithet states that *"You cannot know where you are going, unless you know where you are, and you cannot know where you are, unless you know from whence you came."* The same may be said of communities. There is something metaphysical in talking and writing about communities. There is a sense of seeking for that essence which is larger than us as individuals, something greater than us, but of which we are part. By being members of a community we become part of, and contribute, to history. This book is an attempt to distil something of the history which has brought us to the beginning of the Third Millennium.

The authors of the chapters are not professional writers, but are members of the communities about which they have written - many of them born in the villages. The contributions are in many respects highly personal. Foot-notes and appendices have been included, where appropriate, in an attempt to assist anyone who wishes to follow up a subject for further research.

There are many people who have not written articles but without whom the project could not have been completed. Among other people, we owe thanks to Steve Walker, co-ordinator of the CAMUS Project, and Nigel Blanchford our Treasurer, and to the Heritage Lottery Fund who with Nationwide and the Countryside Agency funded the writing of the book. Others have contributed behind the scenes: Jim Tovey, Stuart Weston and Edmund Burke helped with and produced much of the art work and graphics; Jim Tovey and Tracey Blackmore took many of the photographs; Millie Weston maintained the Data-Base, set out many of the appendices and typed articles for people; Helen Tovey, Gill Slidel and Sally Leeds proof-read texts. Ben Robinson, Curator of Peterborough Museum, acted as our archaeological advisor. The Nene Valley Archaeological Trust allowed us to reproduce their material, as did the Northamptonshire Record Society and the Victoria County History Society. The Northamptonshire County Record Office and Richard Hillier of the Local Studies Section of Peterborough Library have been invaluable resources. We had no publisher and have consequently imposed hugely on our village printer, Andy Venum of Styalprint in Ailsworth - many thanks to him for his advice, guidance and forbearance.

Lastly, many in the villages provided us with information, photographs and valuable advice and encouragement. It is just not possible to include all the material we have collected - over 2000 documents - in one book. All the material has been kept, recorded and placed in the Parish Archives in the Cedar Centre at Castor, and will find its way onto the Archive Web-Site, the second stage of the CAMUS Project.

William Burke
The Rectory, Castor
The Summer Festival of St Kyneburgha of Castor 2004

Chapter 4

The Anglian Period: The Royal Ladies of Castor ^[1]

St. Kyneburgha of Castor: from Mercian princess to Northumbrian queen

Castor Parish Church stands upon an escarpment, which has been occupied from at least the Roman period. It bears a unique dedication to the seventh-century saint, Kyneburgha or Cyneburh, a Mercian princess and erstwhile queen of Northumbria who, according to local tradition, retired from court in order to establish a nunnery on the site of an abandoned early fourth-century villa.

Reliable, near-contemporary information relating to Kyneburgha is limited to a single reference in Venerable Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* (c. 731), in which she was described as the sister of Peada, King of the Middle Angles, and the wife of Alhfrith, a Christian prince of Northumbria [2]. From this statement we may deduce that she was also the daughter of the unrepentant heathen king, Penda of Mercia (c. 626-c. 655), and his consort, Cynewise, whose stronghold was in the Tamworth area of the Trent Valley [3]. All subsequent references to Kyneburgha are either of post-Conquest date or survive only in the form of twelfth-century copies and, consequently, are much less trustworthy [4]. Nor are there any archaeological finds to substantiate Kyneburgha's relationship with the Castor site. However, by examining *all* of the available sources, in conjunction with place-name and sculptural evidence, it may be possible to gain an insight into the life and times of this remarkable lady.

Kyneburgha was born during an era when England was ruled by a few aristocratic families, both Christian and pagan, who intermarried in attempts to form alliances and to found dynasties in rival provinces. At the same time, they fought and killed one another in their struggle to become rulers of the most dominant Anglo-Saxon kingdom. Bede recorded that, by 650, Mercia was surrounded by territories whose overlords professed to embrace Christianity. They were attracted to the power of the monotheistic God, the King of Kings, through whom they could expect obedience from their subjects during their lifetimes and the promise of prayers for their souls and eternal salvation after death. In the South, Kent was controlled by the pious Eorconberht (640-664) [5], while Anna (633-654), '*a very religious man*', reigned over the East Angles [6]. Even the barbaric Cædwalla of Gwynedd, who had helped his ally, Penda, to kill the convert king, Edwin of Northumbria, in the Battle of *Hæthfelth* in 633, claimed to be a follower of Christ [7]. Although the Northumbrians briefly lapsed into paganism following the death of Edwin, his successor, Oswald (634-642), ensured that their faith was re-affirmed by Aidan, an Irish-trained priest from Iona [8]. Therefore, it was only matter of when and by whom the conversion of Mercia might be achieved.

It was in this climate c.654, presumably during a brief *entente* between two usually hostile provinces, that Kyneburgha of Mercia was given in marriage to Alhfrith, sub-ruler of Deira, the Southern province of Northumbria, and son of Penda's arch-enemy, Oswiu, King of Northumbria [9]. By 654, a second marriage was being negotiated between Penda's son, Peada, and Alhflæd, daughter of Oswiu. However, Oswiu stipulated that before the nuptials could take place, Peada first must adopt Christianity. This, Bede explained, he was ready to do regardless of the outcome of his suit. After receiving religious instruction and additional encouragement from his friend and brother-in-law, Alhfrith, Peada was baptized by Finan, the Irish Bishop of Lindisfarne, at a place called *Ad Murum* [10]. He then returned to Mercia '*rejoycing more in the eternal Salvation than in the virgin he had gotten in Northumberland*' [11].

Peada already had been appointed by his father as sub-king of a people known as the Middle Angles, whose territory probably covered the later counties of Leicestershire and Northamptonshire [12]. We do not know where Peada and his bride established their *villa regalis*. However, the site of the derelict Roman villa on the escarpment at Castor (centred at TL 1251 9854) would have been an obvious choice, a location as relevant in the Anglo-Saxon period as it had been in the early fourth century, when the building had first been constructed [13]. First, Castor was situated in close proximity to an extensive network of Roman roads, including the Fen Causeway, which led from the Midlands into the heart of East Anglia, and King Street, which linked with Ermine Street, the Roman legions' main route from London to York [14]. Secondly, the River Nene was, arguably, still a navigable waterway and the Roman wharf (centred at TL 138- 986-) may have been operational as late as the seventh century [15]. Thirdly, situated on the 'Nass' or headland,

the site commanded a spectacular view of the Nene Valley and, consequently, of friends and foes alike approaching from all directions. Finally, Castor was near to the border with another rival kingdom, East Anglia. Thus, the site would have enabled Penda to maintain a presence in a strategic position formerly associated with Roman authority.

Peada and Alhflæd returned to the Kingdom of the Middle Angles with a company of four Irish-trained priests, Adda, Betti, Cedd and Diuma, whose mission it was to evangelize the whole of Mercia. According to Bede, they accomplished this feat with considerable success [16]. Apparently, Penda showed tolerance towards Christians, provided that they were sincere in their faith. However, it is unlikely that he would have allowed the establishment of any churches or monasteries within his own kingdom during his lifetime [17]. This, probably, did not happen until Oswiu and Alhfrith, Kyneburgha's husband, had defeated and killed Penda in the Battle of *Winwaed*, c.655. Magnanimous in victory, Oswiu appointed his son-in-law, Peada, who appears to have been absent from the conflict, as 'client-king' of the South Mercians [18].

We only have the word of *Relatio Hedde Abbatis*, a twelfth-century copy of an early history of Peterborough Abbey, written four hundred and fifty years after the event allegedly took place, that Oswiu and Peada, as a possible gesture of thanksgiving founded *Medeshamstede* [Peterborough], within the territory of the Middle Angles [19]. The story was repeated in Manuscript 'E' of *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and was later elaborated upon by Hugh Candidus in his own house-history, both of which were known to have been compiled in Peterborough [20]. Bede, a more reliable 7th century source maintained that *Medeshamstede* was founded by its first abbot, Seaxwulf, some time before c. 673 [21]. However, according to Bede, Oswiu *did* establish twelve monasteries within his own kingdom, after his victory at *Winwaed*. Therefore, it is quite feasible to suggest that he also was involved in *Medeshamstede*'s foundation, at some point between 655 and 670, the year of Oswiu's death [22]. Unfortunately, Peada did not live to see his plans come into fruition. At Easter in 656, he was murdered by his wife, Alhflæd, or so it was said, a deed that resulted in Oswiu's absorption of Southern Mercia under Northumbrian rule [23].

In contrast, Bede, writing over half a century later and over two-hundred miles away in Jarrow, was tantalizingly brief in his account of Peada's demise and even hinted that Alhflæd may not have been the real culprit. Three years later, the Mercian noblemen, Immin, Eafa and Eadberht rebelled against their Northumbrian oppressors and expelled them from the province, installing Wulfhere, Peada's youthful brother as their king [24].

Meanwhile, Kyneburgha appeared to have remained in the North, probably residing within in her husband's sub-kingdom of Deira [25]. Presumably, like her brother, Peada, she was introduced to Christianity by Bishop Finan of Lindisfarne and also by her husband, Alhfrith, whose friends included some of the most ambitious and learned young clerics of the age, such as Wilfrid (634-709), later Bishop of York and founder of Hexham and Ripon (672-678), [26] and Benedict Biscop (628-690), who established Bede's monastery of Wearmouth (674) and Jarrow (681) [27].

Both Wilfrid and Biscop subscribed to the Roman form of Christianity, as opposed to the more ascetic Celtic or Irish version favoured by Oswiu, and made regular pilgrimages to Rome, returning with exquisite artefacts and relics of saints with which they adorned their churches [28]. Alhfrith had been invited to accompany them, in 653, but Oswiu had thwarted his plans [29]. However, it appeared that, undeterred, Alhfrith stalwartly supported Wilfrid against his father at the Synod of Whitby of 664, at which the Roman form of Christianity became the official state religion instead of the Irish version [30]. Alhfrith's final recorded act was to dispatch Wilfrid, as the newly appointed Bishop of York, to Gaul to receive consecration as prescribed by the Church of Rome [31]. After 664, Alhfrith vanishes from all records and it is generally assumed that his disappearance was due to an unsuccessful attempt to oust his own father from the Northumbrian throne [32]. This was not the first time that Alhfrith had embarked upon such a plot. In 643, he had fought alongside Penda against Oswiu, and it is possible that it was during this campaign that his friendship with Peada had developed [33]. Tradition has dictated that an early eighth-century, carved cross at Bewcastle (Cumbria) was erected in Alhfrith's honour, near the spot where he either died or was buried. Unfortunately, the monument is now so badly weathered that it is impossible to read the runic writing, which is said to have borne the name '*Cyneburug*' [34]. Furthermore, Douglas MacLean has suggested that the inscription, interpreted by early twentieth-century antiquarians as a dedication to Alhfrith, may possibly have been the work of nineteenth-century forgers [35].

The monastery of *Kyneburge cæstre*

After her husband's death, it is unlikely that Kyneburgha remained in Northumbria for long. Perhaps, she was expelled by her father-in-law or, alternatively, she may have decided that it would be prudent to return to her own kingdom. By 664 Mercia, superficially at least, was a Christian kingdom, though vestiges of paganism may still have lingered.

According to Bede, Wulfhere, Kyneburgha's Christian brother, had acceded to the throne upon the expulsion of the Northumbrians from the kingdom, c. 658 [36]. Mercia was now a powerful and independent state, but Kyneburgha's presence may have been viewed as somewhat of an embarrassment to Wulfhere. Furthermore, she may have found life in a nunnery more appealing than remarriage. At this time, no known convent existed in the province to which she could retire. Therefore, perhaps, Wulfhere seized the opportunity to establish one, on Kyneburgha's behalf, as a complementary house for nuns *and* monks to *Medeshamstede* (Peterborough), as later medieval chroniclers have suggested [37].

Nevertheless, it is more plausible that it was at Kyneburgha's own instigation that the monastery at Castor was founded. Her husband's friend and mentor, Bishop Wilfrid, later proved to be very efficient at luring Northumbrian queens into convents with the promises of eternal life. He was instrumental in persuading Æthelthryth (Etheldreda) of East Anglia to abandon her husband, Ecgrith, another of Oswiu's sons, in order to take the veil. She later founded the Abbey of Ely [38]. The example of Æthelthryth may lead us to suggest that the ambitious Wilfrid may have influenced Kyneburgha into taking her vows, thus ensuring that he had a useful ally in Mercia.

Wulfhere, who was also a friend and patron of Wilfrid, may have placed the site of the Roman villa at Castor at Kyneburgha's disposal [39]. Its association with Roman authority and its close proximity to the River Nene and the Roman road system could have had a certain appeal to both the Mercian king, whose power base was at *Tomtun* (Tamworth), and to his sister, who may have wished to have revive what she may have perceived to be a nucleus of Romano-British Christianity [40].

Archaeological evidence

Although local tradition dictates that a convent was founded by St. Kyneburgha during the late seventh century in the courtyard of the massive Roman villa/*prætorium* (centred at TL 1251 9854), no decisive archaeological evidence survives to substantiate its existence [41]. However, there are strong indications of Anglo-Saxon activity in the area, as revealed by the discovery, in 1990, of a bronze hanging-bowl dated c. 625 closely resembling those of the Sutton Hoo Hoard [42]. This would imply an aristocratic presence in the vicinity, only a generation before the conjectural foundation of St. Kyneburgha's nunnery. More recently, in 1998, during the installation of the Peterborough to Lutton gas pipeline, three sixth-century pagan inhumations were unearthed (at TL 1134 9929) spanning the former Roman thoroughfare to Lincoln, now known as King Street [43].

The site of the Roman villa/*prætorium*, was first excavated by Edmund Artis (1789-1847) in 1828. He discovered a conglomeration of buildings, including a bath-house and a substantial courtyard edifice, which he interpreted as either a significant residence or a *prætorium* (government offices). Although he meticulously recorded his discoveries in his masterwork, *The Durobrivæ of Antoninus*, he mistakenly identified the complex as the Roman *vicus* of *Durobrivæ*, now known to be on the South bank of the River Nene at Chesterton (TL 1168 9717) [44]. Artis recorded no Anglo-Saxon finds in the vicinity, although they may have been overlooked or even destroyed in his enthusiastic search for Roman remains.

Between 1955 and 1958, further exploratory work was conducted on the site by C & J Green, JP Wild and C Dallas. Not only did they identify the early fourth-century structures revealed by Artis, but they also uncovered, in the garden of 'Elmlea' (centred at TL 1242 9851), two sunken-floored buildings, which over-laid Roman paving, and a cess-pit containing sherds of pottery, dating from c.700-c.900. Other finds included a pair of shears, a bronze wrist-clasp, a spindle whorl and a decorated bone comb, all artifacts which are associated with women [45].

The most recent archaeological investigation of the villa site took place in 1997/8 in the orchard or rear garden of 'The Cedars' (centred at TL 1239 9853). The work consisted of a geophysical survey by Adrian Challands [46] and a desk-based evaluation of the previous excavations in the area by Gavin Lucas [47], prior to the construction of the Cedars Benefice Centre in the churchyard. Both archaeologists reached the conclusion that the Roman villa/*prætorium* extended further than they had originally believed. Furthermore, they deduced that it had been re-occupied rather than destroyed during the early Anglo-Saxon period, with a timber-post structure having been erected within the shell of its predecessor [48]. Lucas suggested that the earliest identifiable occupation of the Castor complex was by the Romans or Romano-British and that the site continued to be inhabited by early Anglo-Saxon settlers in the region. Moreover, stone appears to have been robbed from the villa at some time between 650 and 870, perhaps, for the construction of a church. However, there is no physical evidence to determine that a seventh-century religious house was present on the site [49].

Documentary evidence

Written evidence pertaining to the foundation of a convent at Castor is also sparse. Although Bede acknowledged Kyneburgha's lineage, he makes no reference to either her sister, Kyneswitha, or her nunnery [50]. Unfortunately, since there was no Mercian equivalent of Bede to record the history of the kingdom, trustworthy records are unavailable [51]. The earliest dependable reference relating to St Kyneburgha's establishment appeared in a twelfth-century copy of an authentic charter, dated 948, in which the bounds of *Ægelswurd* [Ailesworth] were described as being contiguous with those of *Kyneburge cæstre* [52]. However, this document merely implied that a lady of substance by the name of Kyneburgha had owned property in the settlement and, possibly, had resided there herself and makes no reference to a nunnery.

The earliest reliable citation of an actual monastic foundation at Castor is preserved in a version of *The Mildrith Legend*, written at St Augustine's Abbey, in Canterbury, c.1100 [53]. Both Kyneburgha and Kyneswitha are mentioned in this 'Vita' or 'Life of Mildrith', who was the daughter of Penda's son, Merewahl, and his Kentish wife, Domne Eafe (See Genealogy). It appears that Kyneburgha's reputation reached beyond her own kingdom, since Mildrith's hagiographer declared that she, '*Queen Kyneburgha left behind an illustrious sign of her virtue, more correctly, her own name, at Castor*' [54].

A copy of an early twelfth-century forgery, which claimed to be Wulfhere's foundation charter of AD 664, granting estates and privileges to the Abbey of *Medeshamstede* (Peterborough), was a little more precise in its biography of Kyneburgha, stating that she was '*a former queen, who had exchanged her royal power to become a hand-maiden in Christ, presiding over a monastery which is graced with her name, the mother of many saintly virgins*' [55]. Although this document is spurious, the tradition that Kyneburgha had founded a nunnery at Castor appears to have endured at Peterborough over three centuries after her death. It also is tempting to conjecture that the convent was consecrated in the honour of the Virgin Mary, as a declaration of their celibacy [56]. It would not have been appropriate for Kyneburgha to dedicate a nunnery to herself and it may be assumed that her name was adopted through her association with the site.

This spurious post-Conquest charter probably was used in its 'original' form as a source by the first scribe of Manuscript 'E' of *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which was compiled in Old English at Peterborough, c.1121 [57], and by Hugh Candidus, who commenced his own *Peterborough Chronicle*, c.1155 [58]. Both *Chronicles* claim that Kyneburgha and Kyneswitha were involved in the completion of *Medeshamstede*, a role that placed them on a par with their brothers, Æthelred and Merewalh. Furthermore, it reveals that the twelfth-century forger believed that the sisters had a significant role in the promotion of Christianity in the region [59].

The princesses were also linked with Castor in a later appendix of John (Florence) of Worcester's *Chronicle*, written c.1295 [60]. Nevertheless, it was not until the fourteenth century that John of Tynemouth, a monk of St. Albans (c.1346), began his definitive biography of English saints. In his quest for knowledge, he appears to have studied all the hitherto available data before placing the nunnery, which he named *Dormundescaestre*, '*not far from the River Nene and is called by those living there, Kyneburge castrum*' [61]. It is upon this account that subsequent hagiographies have been based [62].

Therefore, despite the dearth of reliable archaeological evidence, documentary sources suggest that, from 948, at least, it was believed that a monastery had been established at Castor. There may also have been a resident priest, whose duties would have been to deliver pastoral care to the local community and celebrating masses for the souls of the Kyneburgha's relatives [63].

Despite the abundance of dressed stone in the vicinity, it is unlikely that this commodity was immediately put to use at the proposed monastic site at Castor. The Middle Angles may not yet have had the technology in Kyneburgha's day. Both Bede and Stephen of Ripon related how Bishop Wilfrid and Benedict Biscop were obliged to import masons from Gaul and Francia in order to create Ripon and Hexham, Wearmouth and Jarrow some twenty years later [64]. Therefore, one may conclude that the first church and conventual buildings on the site were constructed from timber and thatched with reed, materials readily available in the vicinity.

The monastic lifestyle

Among Kyneburgha's followers was her sister, Kyneswitha, who had been married to King Offa of the East Angles (c.674-709). Inspired by a vision of the Virgin Mary, she apparently managed to extricate herself from the relationship in order to take the veil, adding weight to my theory that the convent may have been dedicated to the Virgin [65]. According to tradition, Kyneswitha succeeded Kyneburgha as abbess after her death, c.680 [66]. It is likely that the sisters' companions were also of noble birth. Anglo-Saxon convents were not refuges for the poor but places to settle devout gentlewomen, widowed aristocrats and unmarried daughters, all of whom brought with them a substantial dowry. Therefore, it is possible that their life at Castor was little different from that at court. Bede described the indignation of the ascetic Irishman, Adamnan, a monk of the double monastery of Coldingham, in Northumbria, at the behaviour of his fellow residents, who preferred to slumber instead of attending the night offices. Moreover, Bede related that the nuns at Coldingham spent their waking hours, not in prayer and quiet contemplation, but weaving fine cloths '*to adorn themselves like brides*' and in eating, drinking, gossiping and indulging '*in other delights*' in their cells [67]. In contrast, at Ely, Abbess Æthelthryth, who, coincidentally, had received her veil and habit from Bishop Wilfrid at Coldingham, adhered to a much stricter regime, fasting instead of feasting and taking a hot bath only at Easter, Pentecost and Epiphany, and then only after the other nuns had washed first [68]. Obviously, Æthelthryth did not consider that cleanliness came next to Godliness.

According to the early twelfth-century forgery of King Wulfhere's Charter (AD 664), which may, as previously stated, contain certain elements of truth, Kyneburgha and Kyneswitha were not incarcerated in their monastery. Indeed, the author suggests that the princesses acted with their brothers, Æthelred and Merewahl, in an advisory capacity to Wulfhere over the completion of the Abbey of *Medeshamstede* after Peada's untimely assassination [69]. Moreover, the two nuns were 'testators' to the forged charter, implying that the author considered them eminent enough to be present at the dedication ceremony. The forger also claimed that Alhfrith's comrade, Wilfrid, and even more astonishingly, Kyneburgha's father-in-law, Oswiu, the Abbey's co-founder, attended and signed the document [70]. However, Alhfrith is conspicuous by his absence from the list of witnesses, prompting speculation that the author of the document believed that the sub-king had already been removed by 664, thus, conveniently freeing Kyneburgha to take her religious vows.

The spurious charter suggests that Wulfhere valued his sister's opinion and that she had been sufficiently astute to escape the wrath of Oswiu after her husband had fallen from grace and that the twelfth-century forger of the charter clearly believed that she was either a consummate diplomat or a force to be reckoned with. Indeed, she was the formidable Penda's daughter!

Kyneburgha's lot cannot have been easy, living with Alhfrith and his machinations, not to mention the possibly strained relationship with her father-in-law, Oswiu whom, it must be remembered, was responsible for the death of her own father [71]. She must certainly have had strength of character and faith in her new religion in order to survive. It is tempting to draw parallels with other indomitable seventh-century ladies, such as Æthelthryth of Ely [72], Abbess Hild, who hosted the Synod of Whitby [73] and Oswiu's queen, Eanflaed, who was instrumental in persuading her husband to adopt the Roman stance at the Council, despite the fact that he had spent his formative years at the Irish monastery of Iona [74].

Castor: a centre of pilgrimage?

After their deaths, the royal sisters were probably laid to rest either in the graveyard or in the monastery church at Castor. In the late-eighth or early-ninth century, a workshop of master sculptors was established at *Medeshamstede*, described by archaeologists as the 'Peterborough Group' [75]. An elaborate sarcophagus depicting a series of saints standing on tiptoe beneath a foliated arcade may have been constructed to house the princesses' mortal remains (Fig 4a). In 1924, a surviving fragment, depicting a single nimbed or



Fig 4a. The 'Castor Slab'.

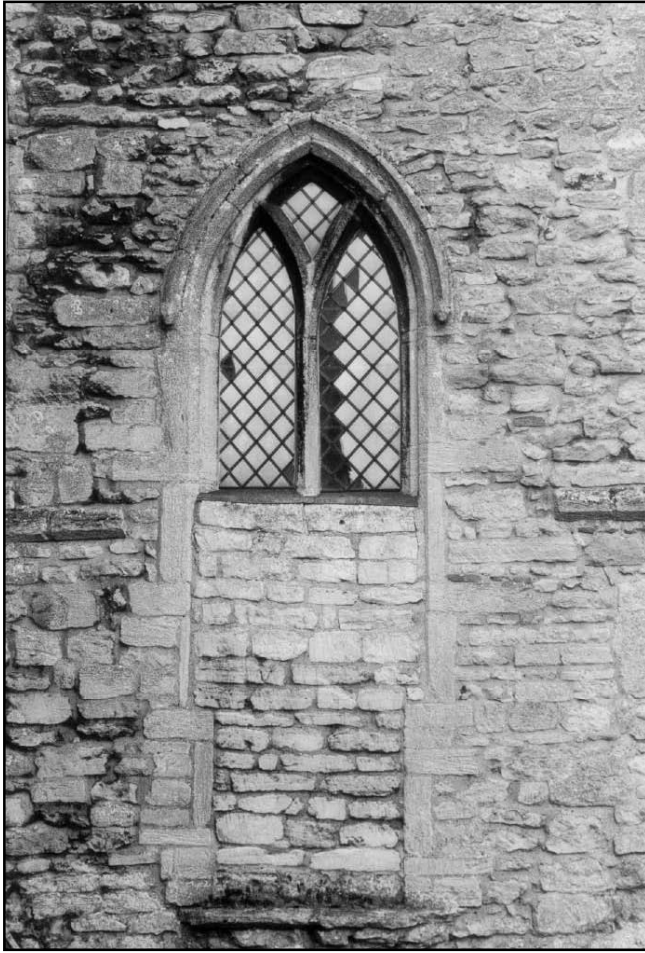


Fig 4b. The blocked doorway in East wall of the North transept.

fourteenth century, the Eastern section of the North aisle was decorated with scenes from Kyneburgha's life, corresponding with those depicting the passion of St. Catherine at the West end [81]. This would suggest that fragments of the saints' relics had remained at Castor after their bodies had been translated to Peterborough, c.1013 [82]. Since there is no record of a post-Conquest religious community operating at Castor, it can be assumed that by that time St. Kyneburgha's was functioning as purely as a parish church [83]. Therefore, the wall paintings would have served as a visual aid for the education of a mainly illiterate congregation, thus perpetuating the memory of the saint until the Reformation over two centuries later.



Fig 4c. The demi-figure of Christ in the gable of the South porch.

haloed figure and part of a second, was discovered, lying face-downwards beneath a paving stone in the twelfth-century chancel when the altar rails were moved [76]. The carving bears a remarkable resemblance to the figures featured on the solid grave-marker of similar date in Peterborough Cathedral, known as the 'Hedda Stone' (Figs 4d.1&2). [77]. The 'Castor Slab' has recently been re-positioned in the Eastern wall of the North aisle, which is believed to have been the site of the sisters' reliquary [78]. A blocked, thirteenth-century doorway, in the Eastern wall of the North transept, contains recycled Anglo-Saxon long-and-short quoins, which may have been deliberately salvaged from an entrance to an earlier shrine in order to maintain a link with the church's pre-Conquest past (Fig 4b). [79].

Surviving sculptural and architectural evidence implies that Castor may have been a centre of pilgrimage during the early ninth century and, perhaps, even as late as the Reformation. Thus, the foundation would have been provided with a lucrative source of income. The layout of the church would suggest that wealthy visitors may have been ushered through a North door, past the saints' painted sepulchre, which may have been glimpsed through a grill, and then out via an Eastern door in the North transept, hopefully emerging spiritually refreshed by their experience. This arrangement, reminiscent of Reculver, in Kent, would ensure that the interruption of church services was kept to a minimum [80].

Dr. Miriam Gill has proposed that, during the early fourteenth century, the Eastern section of the North aisle was decorated with scenes from Kyneburgha's life, corresponding with those depicting the passion of St. Catherine at the West end [81]. This would suggest that fragments of the saints' relics had remained at Castor after their bodies had been translated to Peterborough, c.1013 [82]. Since there is no record of a post-Conquest religious community operating at Castor, it can be assumed that by that time St. Kyneburgha's was functioning as purely as a parish church [83]. Therefore, the wall paintings would have served as a visual aid for the education of a mainly illiterate congregation, thus perpetuating the memory of the saint until the Reformation over two centuries later.

A second fragment of sculpture, which has been associated with the religious community, once stood in the churchyard, implying that it could have been the grave-marker of an Anglo-Saxon dignitary or even an indicator of a place of pilgrimage (Fig 4e). [84]. Its shape and size suggest that it was once a Roman altar, which was reworked during the late eighth or early ninth century, with winged dragons whose tails intertwine, echoing the patterns of 'Mercian beasts' on the roof of the 'Hedda Stone' (Figs 4d.1&2). [85]. Dr. Plunkett's theory, that the stone may have once have functioned as a shrine support, seems improbable on the grounds that there is little evidence of a socket in the upper surface [86]. The

absence of this feature would also rule out the likelihood that the altar was converted into a cross-shaft. Nor is there any suggestion of a drainage hole, which would have indicated its use as a piscina or font. It is possible that the Roman altar was pressed into service as a holy water stoup, which was removed from the church upon the Reformation [87].

The enshrinement of the Castor saints may have coincided with the reconstruction of the church in stone c.825-850 [88]. It would appear that the monastery continued to flourish, since a carved tympanum of pre-Conquest date, portraying a demi-figure of Christ in Majesty beneath a sun and moon, survived to be re-sited in the gable of the early thirteenth-century South porch (Fig 4c). The long, lean fingers held in a Benedictine blessing to welcome pilgrims and worshippers alike, would suggest a late tenth or eleventh-century date [89]. The presence of the carving would indicate that the church continued to be of considerable importance, possibly enjoying minster or 'mother church' status during this period, with chapelries at Ailesworth, Milton, Sutton and Upton [90].

The decline of the monastery

Disaster must have befallen the community during the rule of Abbot Ælfsige of Peterborough (1006-1041), possibly at the hands of the Danes, c.1013, for Hugh Candidus recorded that the church at *Cyneburch-caster* [Castor] as being then in a 'much ruined' state [91]. Furthermore, in his twelfth-century history, he stated that the enterprising monks of Ramsey were preparing to

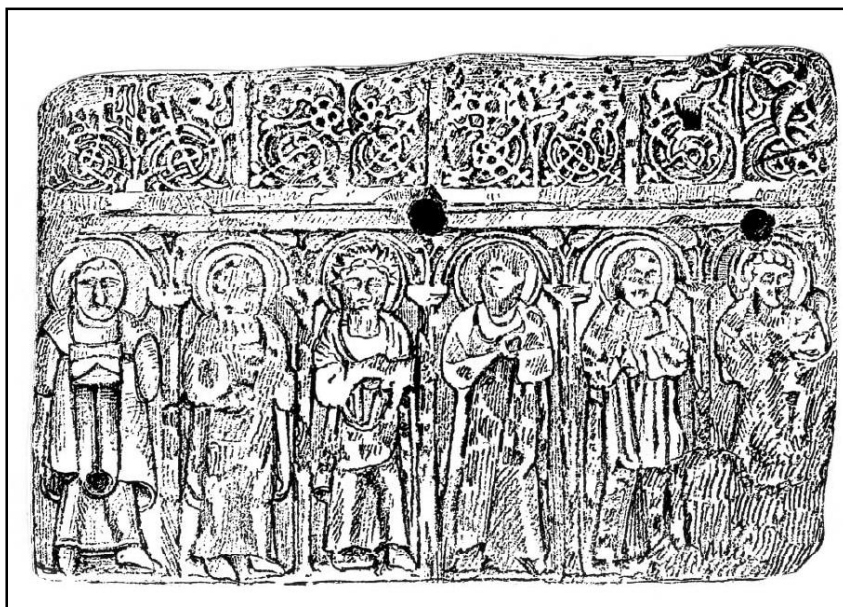


Fig 4d.1. The 'Hedda Stone' Peterborough Cathedral. Saints arranged beneath a foliated arcade.

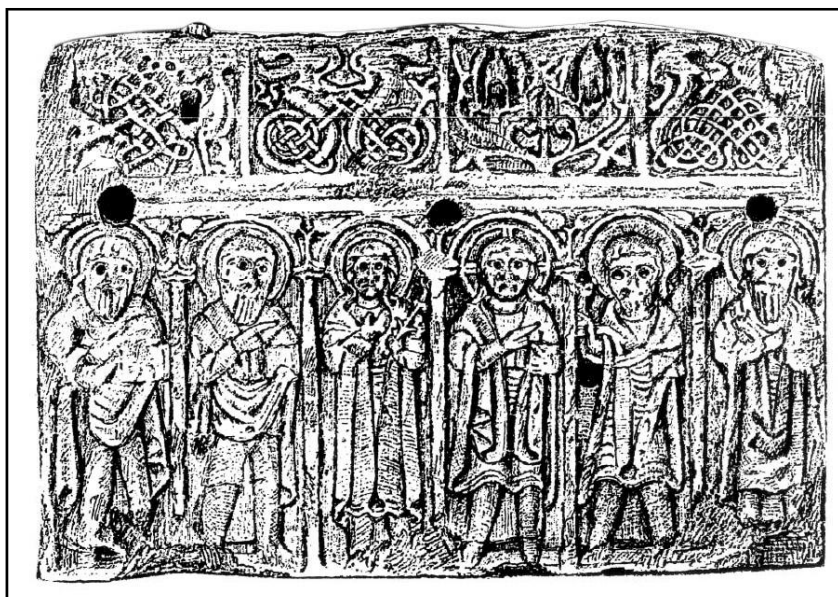


Fig 4d.2. The two central figures depict the Virgin and Christ holding a Gospel. The second saint from the left bears a remarkable resemblance to that on the 'Castor Slab'. Compare the carvings on the roof of the sculpture with those on the Castor cross base. (Fig 4e).

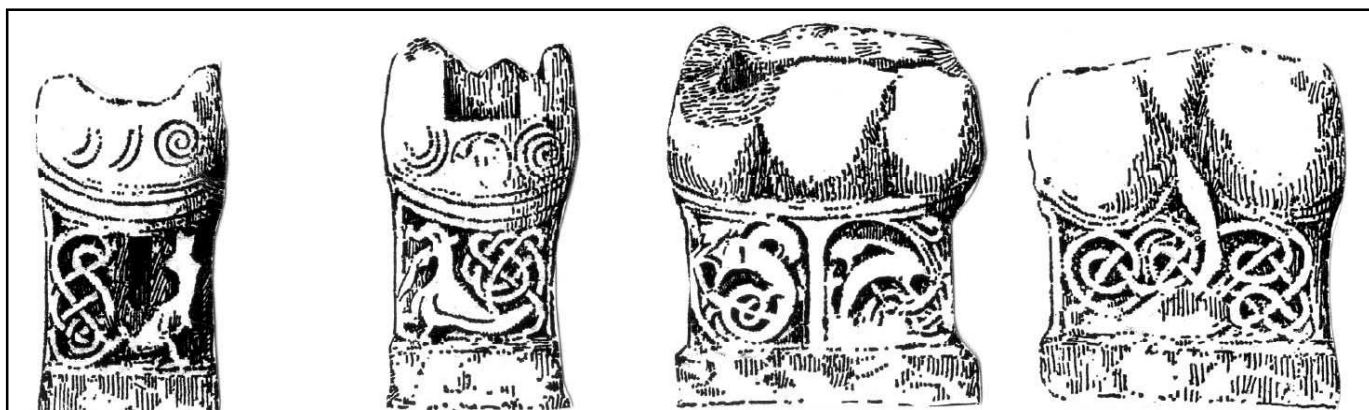


Fig 4e. The Castor cross base reflects the intertwining dragons' tails on the 'Hedda Stone'. (Figs 4d.1 and 2).
(Courtesy Victoria County History Society Northamptonshire, Volume 2).

purloin the princesses' relics and to carry them off to their own establishment. Fortunately, Leofwin, a monk of the restored foundation of *Burch* [Peterborough], had, through the medium of prayer, invited the saintly sisters to join the rapidly increasing collection of relics at his monastery. Apparently, his request was granted and Kyneburgha and Kyneswitha, together with their kinswoman, St Tibba of Ryhall, were translated without delay [92]. Sadly, the mortal remains of the aristocratic trio were either destroyed in the Nine Days' Fire of 1116 [93] or vanished during the Reformation, although a chapel in Peterborough Cathedral remains dedicated in their honour. Nevertheless, as late as 1532, Castor Church was consecrated to a trinity of royal saints, namely Kyneburgha, Kyneswitha and Tibba [94].

The St. Tibba connection

The life of St Tibba is shrouded in obscurity. Furthermore, there is neither archaeological nor documentary evidence to prove that she was ever interred at Castor or to substantiate the existence of a shrine dedicated to her at Ryhall. Moreover, her final resting place is excluded from an eleventh-century list of saints' burial places, implying that she may have been dismissed as being of minor importance when the work was compiled c.1031 if, indeed, her sainthood was recognized beyond her own province [95].

According to the twelfth-century chronicler, Hugh Candidus, Tibba was a pious virgin, who had posthumously requested that she should be buried with '*her saintly friends*', Kyneburgha and Kyneswitha [96]. Both the author of *The Mildrith Legend* [97] and John of Tynemouth, writing c. 1346, described Tibba as their blood relative [98], '*who, living in great sanctity and solitude for many years, commended her soul to God*' [99]. Thus, the possibility of relationship between the Mercian princesses and the anchoress of Ryhall should not be entirely disregarded. Retirement from secular life, whether to a convent or to a hermit's cell, was the prerogative of aristocrats, such as Æthelthryth of Ely [100], Hild of Whitby [101] and Mildrith of Minster-in-Thanet [102]. Therefore, Tibba may have been a cousin, perhaps distant, of Kyneburgha and Kyneswitha, and was certainly locally important enough to warrant a shared interment in a chapel at Peterborough.

It is possible that both Tibba's cell and shrine may have fallen into decay by the early eleventh-century, prompting the elevation of her relics to Peterborough. Alternatively, she could have been translated to Castor upon her death. Nevertheless, it must be considered that, if she became a recluse, as John of Tynemouth claimed, then from which religious foundation did she retire? It appears that seventh-century, eremitic saints were initially required to complete their spiritual training and take their vows at a conventional monastery before withdrawing to a life of seclusion [103]. During the late seventh century, the nearest convent to St. Tibba's cell, at Ryhall, was probably at Castor. Therefore, since seventh century nunneries were often family affairs, it is reasonable to speculate that Tibba may have served her noviciate under Kyneburgha and Kyneswitha, suggesting an even closer relationship with the daughters of Penda [104]. After receiving the veil, she may have withdrawn to her sanctuary at Ryhall as part of a spiritual progression, only to be reunited with her relatives either at Castor, upon her death, or three centuries later, at Peterborough. This sequence of events would provide an explanation for their shared interment at Peterborough and triple dedication at Castor.

Myths and legends

Remarkably, over thirteen centuries after its foundation, Kyneburgha's name is perpetuated in her church at Castor. Her saint's day is still celebrated here, each year on 6 March, the anniversary of her translation to Peterborough [105]. She is also commemorated in the Roman track known as Lady Conyburrow's Way, which once led from Castor Field to *Durobrivæ* [106]. There is a charming legend, which relates that a pathway miraculously appeared when Kyneburgha, while on a mission of mercy, was pursued by three villains intent on compromising her. A chasm opened up behind her and engulfed her assailants, whilst a carpet of flowers sprang from the contents of her spilled basket. Thus, her honour was preserved [107]. An early twelfth-century capital of one of the pillars beneath the tower depicts two men locked in armed combat, while a tearful maiden turns her back on the scene (Fig 4f.). Is this folk-lore preserved in stone or an allegory representing Penda, her father, and Oswui, her father-in-law, or Alhfrith, her husband, all of whom may be perceived as preventing Kyneburgha from following her true vocation? Penda, Oswiu and Alhfrith may be interpreted as the three 'ruffians', all of whom were capable of committing the foulest of deeds in order to fulfil their ambitions [108]. The carpet of flowers was, perhaps, intended to symbolize Kyneburgha's virtue and the blossoming of her church.

According to popular tradition, Kyneburgha and Alhfrith were the parents of the child protégé, St Rumwold (Rumbold) [109]. The infant was born at King's Sutton, Northamptonshire, the child of the Christian daughter of King Penda and the heathen son of a Northumbrian king. Rumwold entered the world proclaiming, '*I am a Christian*' and, at three

days' old, preached a sermon on the Trinity, announced his impending death and his desire to be interred first at King's Sutton for a year, then at Brackley for two years and, finally, at Buckingham [110]. However, it is more likely that the precocious Rumwold, if indeed he existed, was born to Æthelwald, the son of Oswald, who had allied with Penda and Ahlfrith against his uncle, Oswiu, c. 643, and may have married another daughter of Penda, whose name is unknown [111]. During the early decades of the eighteenth century, anecdotes concerning Kyneburgha abounded. The antiquarian, William Stukeley recorded in his diary that, during a visit to Castor in September 1737, he learnt about a saint, '*whom the vulgar call Lady Ketilborough, and of her coming in a coach and six, riding over the field along the Roman road, some nights before Michaelmas*' [112]. Although these stories may be dismissed as figments of a fertile imagination, it may be deduced that a fascination for Kyneburgha had been maintained over the centuries and doubtlessly tales of her life were duly fabricated or adapted from popular myths and contemporary ghost stories.



Fig 4f. A possible carving of St Kyneburgha and two of the three ruffians.

Conclusion

St. Kyneburgha's name has endured at Castor since at least AD 948. She is mentioned by Venerable Bede in his *Ecclesiastical History*, completed a couple of generations after her death. She also appears the tenth-century *The Mildrith Legend* as well as in, Manuscript 'E' of *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, and in the *Peterborough Chronicle of Hugh Candidus*. However, the latter two works although written, in Peterborough, were compiled almost five hundred years after Kyneburgha had allegedly founded her convent and, therefore, may be much less dependable. Two other twelfth-century historians, William of Malmesbury [113] and John (Florence) of Worcester [114], also refer to her in passing. Nevertheless, it is not until the fourteenth century that John of Tynemouth, a monk of St. Albans (c.1325-48), began to carefully research her life and that of her sister, Kyneswitha, for his hagiography of English saints, concluding that her monastery was situated not far from the River Nene, '*and is called by those who live there, Kyneburge castrum*' [115]. Although his work was written over six centuries after Kyneburgha's death, John of Tynemouth's hagiography formed the basis for all subsequent accounts of her life [116].

Unfortunately, no archaeological finds have been discovered to corroborate the existence of a nunnery at Castor, during the latter half of the seventh century. Nevertheless, documentary, sculptural and place-name evidence and the unique church dedication all indicate that Kyneburgha, confirmed by Bede as the daughter of King Penda of Mercia, was closely associated with the site [117]. Despite the unreliability of post-Conquest literature, Kyneburgha must have been a truly fascinating, courageous and, probably, formidable character in order to generate so much interest and speculation, over thirteen hundred years after she allegedly founded her 'double monastery' on the escarpment, where Castor Parish Church stands today.

Avril Morris

Avril's interest in Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical history developed during her childhood in Ryhope Village, three miles South of Sunderland and equidistant from the seventh-century churches of Wearmouth and Seaham. After taking up a teaching appointment at Newark Hill School, Peterborough, in 1970, she transferred her attention from Northumbrian to Mercian studies. The Monasteries of *Medeshamstede* and Castor formed an integral part of her MA thesis. Now retired, she is currently researching for her doctorate at the University of Leicester and is a communicant at St. Kyneburgha's Church.

Genealogy of the Ruling Family of Mercia
(Based on Searle, *Anglo-Saxon Bishops, Kings and Nobles*, 1899)

Penda m. Cynewise
632-654

Peada	Wulfhere	Æthelred	Merewalh (?)	Cyneburh	Cyneswith	Wilburh
Sub-king of Mercia 654-656 m.	King of Mercia 657-675 m.	King of Mercia 675-704 m.	King of the Magonsæte m.	Later Abbess of Castor m.	Later Abbess of Castor m. (?)	m.
Alhflæd of Northumbria	Eorminhild of Kent	Osthryth of Northumbria	Domne Eafe of Kent	Alhfrith of Northumbria	Offa of East Anglia	Frithuwold Sub-king of Surrey
↓	↓	↓	↓			↓
Cenred	St. Werburh	Ceolred	St. Mildrith			St. Osyth
King of Mercia 704-709	Abbess of Ely Died c. 700	King of Mercia 709-716	Abbess of Minster Thanet			Died c.675

Notes

- The author would like to thank Dr. Joanna Story of the Department of History, Leicester University, for her helpful advice and comments regarding this chapter.
- Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* [HE.], eds. & trans. B Colgrave & R A B Mynors, Oxford, 1969, iii. 21
- C Hart, *Early Charters of Eastern England*, Leicester, 1966, 99. See also M Gelling, 'The early history of Western Mercia', In: *The Origins of the Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*, Leicester, 1989, 191-2.
- S Foot, *Veiled Women*, Vol. II, Aldershot, 2000, 53-5.
- HE., iii. 8.
- Ibid.*, iv. 19 [17]
- Ibid.*, ii. 20
- Ibid.*, iii. 3
- Ibid.*, iii. 21. Penda had already killed in battle two Northumbrian kings, Edwin (616-633) at *Hæthfelth* [Hatfield Chase] (HE., ii. 20) and Oswald, (634-642), Oswiu's brother, at *Maserfelth* [Oswestry] (*Ibid.*, iii. 9).
- HE., iii. 21
- S Gunton, *The History of the Church of Peterburgh* (*sic.*), London, 1686: facsimile edn., Peterborough, & Stamford, 1990, 228
- HE., iii. 21
- D Mackreth, 'Castor', In: *Durobrivæ*, Vol. IX, 22-4
- ID Margary, *Roman Roads in Britain*, Vol. I, London, 1957, 198 (map). 202-5
- A spoon-shaped depression is visible at TL-138- 986- (PCC., SMR., Rec., No. 08284). See also Margary, *Roman Roads*, Vol. I, 202, & RCHM., *Peterborough New Town*, London, 1969, 22, 39.
- The missionaries' initials, 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D', perhaps, represented new beginnings for the Middle Angles (HE., iii. 21).
- Ibid.*, iii. 21
- Ibid.*, iii. 24
- London: Society of Antiquaries {Soc. Ant.}, MS. 60, ff. 58v-59r
- The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* [ASC (E).], AD 654. See M. Swanton, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*, London, 2000. *The Peterborough Chronicle of Hugh Candidus* [HC.], ed. W. T. Mellows, Oxford, 1949, 7
- HE., iv. 6
- Ibid.*, v. 24
- Ibid.*, iii. 24
- Ibid.*, iii. 24
- South Durham and Yorkshire, North of the River Humber. The River Wear was possibly the demarcation line between the two provinces of Northumbria, Bernicia and Deira.
- HE., v. 19; *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus* [Stephen of Ripon], ed. & trans. B Colgrave, Cambridge, 1927, chap. XXII.
- Biscop established Wearmouth [Monkwearmouth, Sunderland] in 674 and Jarrow in 681 (HE., iv. 18 [16]; Bede, 'The lives of the Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow', trans. D Farmer, Harmondsworth, 1998, chap.4-5, 7).
- D Farmer, trans., 'Bede's Lives of the Abbots', In: *The Age of Bede*, ed. J F Webb, London, 1998, chap. 6

29. *Ibid.*, chap. 2. Oswiu who, like his brother, Oswald, was converted to the Irish form of Christianity on Iona, had little time for Wilfrid (HE., iii. 3; iii. 25). However, Wilfrid enjoyed the patronage of Oswiu's wife, Eanflæd, daughter of Edwin of Northumbria, who had received her religious instruction from Paulinus, a disciple of the Roman cause (*Ibid.*, ii. 9; iii. 25; v. 19).
30. HE., iii. 25, v. 19. It is likely that Kyneburgha attended the Synod of Whitby as Alhfrith's consort.
31. *Ibid.*, iii. 28
32. *Ibid.*, iii. 14; DP Kirby, *The Earliest English Kings*, London, 1991, 103
33. *Ibid.*, iii. 14
34. G Baldwin Brown, *The Arts in Early England*, Vol. V, London, 1921, 314, 201-2, inserts between pages 244 & 245.
35. MacLean, 'The date of the Cross', In: *The Ruthwell Cross*, ed. B Cassidy, Princetown, 1990, 57-9). See also F. Orton, 'Northumbrian Sculpture (The Ruthwell and Bewcastle monuments)', In: *Northumbria's Golden Age*, eds. J Hawkes & S Mills, Oxford, 1999, 219.
36. HE., iii. 24
37. John [Florence] of Worcester claimed that Wulfhere and his brother, Æthelred, founded Castor (*The Chronicle of Florence of Worcester*, ed. T. Forrester, London, 1954, 448). See also Barbara Mitchell, 'Anglo-Saxon double monasteries', In: *History Today*, Vol. XLV, No. 10, 1995, 33, 38.
38. HE., iv. 19 [17]
39. B Colgrave, ed. & trans., *Life of Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus*, Cambridge, 1927, chap XIV
40. The hoard was discovered beneath the Roman town of *Durobrivæ*, centred at TL 1168 9717. It consisted of several liturgical instruments which bear the *chi-rho* motif, suggesting that Christianity was being practised in the Castor area in the early fourth century (K Painter, 'The Water Newton Silver Treasure', In: *Durobrivæ*, IV, 1976, 7-9). The Water Newton Treasure is currently preserved in the British Museum. Facsimiles of the items are displayed in Peterborough Museum. Alternatively, since Castor is in close proximity to a network of Roman roads, the treasure may have been buried by a traveller.
41. G Lucas, *From Roman Villa to Saxo-Norman Village: The Archaeological Evaluation of the Cedars at Castor*, Cambridge Archaeological Unit Report No. 260, 1998, 17
42. The hanging-bowl, now restored and displayed at Peterborough Museum, was discovered, at TL 1387 9946, during the construction of the A 47 Castor by-pass. A nose-piece from a helmet of similar date was discovered at the site. (Peterborough City Council [PCC.] Record No. 8254). As at Sutton Hoo, also c. 625, no human remains were found.
43. Network Archaeology, *The Peterborough to Lutton Gas Pipeline*, Vol. I, Report No. 135, April 1998, 32-36. King Street also led to the Anglo-Saxon Hundred Court of the Nassaburgh or Upton Hundred, known as the Langdyke Bush, in the Parish of Ailesworth, at TF 1136 0264 (SAM No. 243).
44. E Artis, *The Durobrivæ of Antoninus*, London, 1928
45. J Green, *et al.*, 'Excavations at Castor, Cambridgeshire', In: *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, Vol. XXI, 1967, 144-5; C Dallas, 'The nunnery of St. Kyneburgha, at Castor', In: *Durobrivæ*, Vol. I, 1973, 16-7; PCC., Rec. No. 00646
46. A Challands, *Report on the Geophysical Survey in Part of the Garden of the Cedars, Castor, Cambridgeshire*, Helpston, 1997.
47. G Lucas, *From Roman Villa to Saxo-Norman Village*, Cambridge, 1998
48. *Ibid.*, 6-7, 16-7
49. *Ibid.*, 17-8
50. HE., iii. 21
51. Felix, St Guthlac of Crowland's hagiographer, although giving graphic descriptions of the fenland landscape and its inhabitants, remained silent on events in the Peterborough area (B. Colgrave, *Felix's Life of St. Guthlac*, Cambridge, 1956).
52. 'Grant of land by King Eadred to his thegn, Ælfsige, three hides at Ægelswurd' (Soc. Ant. MS. 60, f. 30v).
53. BL., MS. Cotton Vespasian Bxx, ff. 143r-63v. Published in *The Mildrith Legend: A Study of Early-Medieval Hagiography in England*, ed. DW Rollason, Leicester, 1982
54. Author's translation ['*Cineburga regina sui nominis castrum immo preclariora uirtutum insignia dereliquit*'] (Rollason, *The Mildrith Legend*, 77, 115).
55. Soc. Ant., MS 60, ff. 59v-64r, 'King Wulfhere of Mercia, grant of lands and privileges'. Author's translation ['*Kyneburga . . . quarii prior mutauit impii in xpi ancillarii, presidens monasterio kyneburgensi ad suo nomine decoratur mater sacrarii uirginii.*'] (MS. 60, f. 59v). See also P Sawyer, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, London, 1968, No. 68
56. It was not uncommon for seventh-century nunneries to be dedicated to the virgin (M Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England*, Cambridge, 1990, 130)
57. Soc. Ant., MS. 60, f. 59v-64v. A facsimile edition of Manuscript 'E' has been produced by Dorothy Whitelock and Cecily Clark (*Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile*, Vol. IV: *The Peterborough Chronicle*, Copenhagen, 1954). *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*, ed. & trans. M Swanton, London, 2000 [ASC.], offers a comprehensive translation of all the recensions of the *Chronicles*.
58. *The Peterborough Chronicle of Hugh Candidus* [HC.], ed. WT Mellows, Oxford, 1949, 10-4
59. Soc. Ant. MS. 60, ff. 59v-60r; ASC., AD 656; HC., 9, 13
60. Forrester, *Florence of Worcester*, 448; Dallas, 'The nunnery of St. Kyneburgha', 17
61. Author's translation ['*non procul ab amne nomine Ven . . . a quo locus ille trahens Kyneburge castrum vocabatur*']. Published in *Nova Legenda Anglie as collected by John of Tynemouth, John Capgrave et al.*, ed. C Horstman, Vol. II, Oxford, 1891, 130
62. Dallas, 'The nunnery of St. Kyneburgha', 17
63. Levison, *England & the Continent*, 22-3; Mitchell, 'Anglo-Saxon double monasteries', 33
64. Bede, *Lives of the Abbots*, chap. 5: Colgrave, *Life of Wilfrid*, cap. XXII
65. Rollason, *Mildrith Legend*, 115; Horstman, *Nova Legenda Anglie*, 131; D Preest, ed. & trans., *The Deeds of the Bishops*, Woodbridge, 2002, chap. 180
66. D Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, Oxford, 1987, 107
67. HE., iv. 25
68. *Ibid.*, iv. 19
69. Soc. Ant., MS. 60, ff. 59v-64r
70. Soc. Ant., MS. 60, f. 63v
71. *Ibid.*, iii. 24
72. Æthelthryth fled from her husband, King Ecgrith of Northumbria, in order to become a nun, having refused to consummate the marriage (*Ibid.*, iv. 19).
73. *Ibid.*, iii. 25
74. *Ibid.*, iii. 25. Oswiu had complained that he celebrated Easter at a different time from his wife and her retinue (*Ibid.*, iii. 25).
75. R Cramp, 'Schools of Mercian Sculpture', In: *Mercian Studies*, ed. A Dornier, Leicester, 1977, 192.
See also AM Morris, 'A Study In Stone: the Peterborough Group of Sculptors', In: *Friends of Peterborough Cathedral Journal*, 2003, 40-2
76. *Peterborough Advertiser*, 2 May 1924. The fragment, measuring 49 X 28.5cm, was either smashed by the Danes, c. 1013, searching for treasure, or during the iconoclasm following the Reformation, after which a piece may have been rescued and hidden for safe-keeping.
77. Richard Bailey and Rosemary Cramp have dated the Hedda Stone as late eighth- or early ninth-century, respectively (Bailey, *The Meaning of Mercian Sculpture*, Leicester, 1990, 8; Cramp, 'Schools of Mercian Sculpture', 192, 211). *Medeshamstede* appears to have been the only Mercian monastery in existence at the time of Peada's death. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that he was interred there.

78. Dr. G Jones, Centre for Local History, University of Leicester, pers. com., July 2001. The sisters' original shrine may have been situated in a *porticus* built into the North wall of the nave, on the site of the North transept. The North aisle, at Castor, was dedicated to St Kyneswitha in 1960 (Rev. William Burke, pers. com., September, 2003).
79. Dr. Phillip Lindley, Department of History of Art, University of Leicester, pers. com., October, 2001
80. Taylor & Taylor, *Anglo-Saxon Architecture*, Vol. II, 506; Dr. Graham Jones, Centre for Local History, University of Leicester, pers. com., July, 2001; Lindley, pers. com., October 2001)
81. Dr. Miriam Gill, Department of the History of Art, University of Leicester, pers. com., July, 2001
82. See below.
83. D Knowles & RN Hadcock, *Medieval Houses in England and Wales, 940-1216*, Cambridge, 1972
84. PCC., SMR., Rec. No. 0891a. The sculpture was moved into church in 1936 and is currently standing in front of the North door (Rev. William Burke, pers. com., September, 2003).
85. Cramp has suggested that the re-used Roman altar was also a product of the 'Peterborough Group' ('Schools of Mercian Sculpture', 211).
86. I. Henderson, 'Anglo-Saxon Sculpture in Cambridgeshire', In: *Cambridgeshire Churches*, Stamford, 1997, 223-4; T. Eaton, *Plundering the Past: Roman Stonework in Medieval Britain*, Stroud, 2002, 73
87. Recycled Roman altars are known to have been used as stoups at St Andrew's Church, Corbridge, [Northumberland], Michaelchurch [Hertfordshire] and St. Andrew Auckland [Co. Durham] (Eaton, *Plundering the Past*, 67-71). The Auckland stoup was recovered from a farmyard (*Ibid.*, 72).
88. Lucas has concluded that the Roman villa was robbed at some time during the mid seventh to mid ninth century (*From Roman to Saxo-Norman Village*, 8, 17-8).
89. Henderson, 'Anglo-Saxon sculpture', 224
90. J Blair, 'Debate: ecclesiastical organization and pastoral care in Anglo-Saxon Europe', In: *Early Medieval Europe*, IV, No. 2, 1995, 195, 199-203. The settlements of Ailesworth, Milton, Sutton and Upton were listed with 'uillam de Castre' in the thirteenth-century copy of pseudo-Wulfhere's charter preserved as BL., MS. Cotton Augustus II. 5.
91. 'ecclesia Kyneburgensis castru ualde destructa.' (HC., 50).
92. HC., 50-1. Peterborough had been restored by Æthelwold, the reforming Bishop of Winchester, c. 963 (ASC [E], AD 963: HC., 27). SS. Kyneburgha and Kyneswitha's interments are recorded in *Secgan be ðam Godes Sanctum ðe on Engla lande ærost reston*, (BL., MS. Stowe 944, f. 38r. Published in RW Rollason, 'List of resting places in Anglo-Saxon England', In: *Anglo-Saxon England*, Vol. VII, 1978, 90).
93. ASC (E), AD 1116: HC., 97
94. E Serjeantson & H Isham Longden, 'The parishes and religious houses of Northamptonshire: Their dedications, altars and lights', In: *Report from the Archaeological Journal*, Vol. LXX, 1919, 295
95. *Secgan be ðam Godes Sanctum ðe on Engla lande ærost reston* (BL., MS. Stowe 944, f. 38r). See Rollason, 'List of resting places', 68, 90.
96. 'se cum sacris amicis' (HC., 51)
97. 'consanguinitate' (Rollason, *The Mildrith Legend*, 115)
98. *Erat autem beata Tibba sanctarum uirginum predictarum consanguinea* (Horstman, *Nova Legend Anglie*, Vol. II, 131)
99. Author's translation ['que multis annis in magna sanctitate solitarie uiuens deo spiritum commendauit'] (*Ibid.*, 131).
100. HE., iv. 19
101. *Ibid.*, iii. 25, iv. 23
102. Rollason, *The Mildrith Legend*, 77-9, 94-102
103. St Cuthbert progressed from becoming a monk at Melrose to being elevated to the bishopric of Lindisfarne, before he sought solitude on Farne (HE., iv. 27 [25], iv. 28 [26]), while Guthlac received the tonsure at Repton, a possible satellite of *Medeshamstede*, before retreating to Crowland (Colgrave, *Life of Guthlac*, chap. XIX-XX; XXIV-V).
104. King Oswiu of Northumbria, dedicated his infant daughter, Ælflæd, to the nunnery of his distant cousin, Hild, at Whitby, where she eventually succeeded the saint as abbess, in 680, and was joined by her own mother, Eanflæd upon her widowhood (HE., iii. 24; iv. 26 [24]). Domne Eafe, wife of Merewalh, a possible son of Penda, and her daughter, Mildrith, both presided over Minster-in-Thanet in the late seventh-century (Rollason, *The Mildrith Legend*, 78, 96-8, 102). Aethelthryth, the foundress of Ely, was succeeded by her sister, Seaxburh, after her death in 679 (HE., iv. 19). Upon her demise, Seaxburh's daughter, Eorminhild, widow of King Wulfhere, and her daughter, Werburh, both became abbesses of Ely in their turn (*Liber Eliensis*, ed. EO Blake, London, 1962, Book I, chap. XXV, XXXVI, XXXVII; Farmer, 1987, 145; 434).
105. St Kyneswitha's feast day is celebrated on 3 January and St Tibba's on 13 December (*AS.*, Vol. VII, 444).
106. J Morton, *The Natural History of Northamptonshire*, London, 1712, 511; J Gough, 'Castor, Caistre or Castre', In: *Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica*, Vol. X, 1819, 99.
107. Morton, *Natural History of Northamptonshire*, 511
108. Penda had killed the Christian Kings Edwin and Oswald of Northumbria in battle (HE., ii. 20, iii. 9). Oswiu had orchestrated the murder of his own cousin, Oswine, in a power struggle over Deira (*Ibid.*, iii. 14). In 643, Alhfrith had fought alongside the heathen Penda against his own father, Oswiu (*Ibid.*, iii. 14, iii. 24).
109. *Acta Sanctorum* [AS.], ed. J Bollandus et al., Vol. VII, Paris & Rome 1865, 441. St Rumwold's *Life* in AS. was based upon John of Tynemouth's hagiography. Therefore Rumwold's parents were not named (*Ibid.*, Vol. LXII, 1887, 685-6). See A Thacker, 'Kings, saints and monasteries in pre-Viking England, In: *Midland History*, X, 1985, 6-7 & RP Hagerty, 'The Buckinghamshire Saints reconsidered. 3. St Rumwold [Rumbold] of Buckingham', In: *Archaeological Society of the County of Buckingham Journal*, Vol. XXX, 1988, 103-9)
110. 'Vita Sancti Rumwoldi', In: *Three Eleventh-century Anglo-Latin Saints*, ed. & trans. R Love, Oxford, 1996, chap. I-XXII)
111. HE., iii. 14; Hagerty, 'The Buckinghamshire Saints', 106-8
112. *The Family Memoirs of William Stukeley*, Vol. III, Durham, 1887, 56
113. Preest, *Deeds of the Bishops.*, chap. 180. William of Malmesbury mistakenly referred to Kyneburgha as 'Cynesthryth'.
114. Forester, *Florence of Worcester*, 448
115. Horstman, *Nova Legenda Anglie*, 132
116. Dallas, 'The nunnery of St Kyneburgha', 17
117. HE. iii. 21